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C O N F I D E N T I A L GEORGETOWN 000029

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TAGS: PHUM PGOV PREL GY UN OAS

SUBJECT: FONMIN DISCUSSES HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL AND OAS VISIT

REF: A. BARCLAY-BULLEN EMAIL 12/20/05

1B. GEORGETOWN 21

Classified By: Ambassador Roland W. Bullen for reason 1.4(d)

11. (C) SUMMARY. Ambassador met with Foreign Minister Insanally January 9 to discuss: a) efforts to strengthen the UN human rights machinery through the Human Rights Council; b) OAS A/SGY Ramdin's anticipated visit and the need for an OAS long-term observer mission for the upcoming elections; and c) the suggestion that Guyana raise issues concerning the Morales government when it assumes the chair of the Rio Group (septel). Insanally will speak with his Caribbean counterparts in the UN about the Human Rights Council. Insanally is unlikely to ask Ramdin to visit before February. END SUMMARY.

Insanally Receptive to Human Rights Council

12. (C) Ambassador delivered Ref A talking points to Insanally on the Human Rights Council negotiations at the UN and the U.S. position regarding the Council's mandate and membership criteria.

- Insanally agreed that the Human Rights Council could have the same stature as other UN bodies and that he is "somewhat open" regarding the Council's composition. More specifically, he said that he is "not averse to an appropriate reduction" in size from the current 53, but does not want it "to go to the other extreme". Rather, the Council should be "representative". Insanally is concerned that a smaller Council would reduce the chances of smaller states becoming members.

- He warned of suspicion at the UN about U.S. motives for the Council. He advised that a transparent membership process is necessary to "tranquillize" this sentiment. Recalcitrant states need reassurance that those with the right qualifications, rather than handpicked U.S. allies, will be able to become members.

- Insanally agreed that the Council "cannot credibly accept countries under sanctions".

- He suggested that alternating the Council's annual meetings between New York and Geneva would increase CARICOM's participation in the human rights body.

- In conclusion, Insanally said he "doesn't see too major of a difference" between U.S. and Guyana positions. He has been out of touch with New York due to recent parliamentary duties. But he will speak with his Caribbean counterparts in the UN to see what they are thinking, and then resume this conversation with Ambassador.

13. (C) Comment. Insanally appeared genuinely interested in the development of a more robust UN human rights body. Political obligations in Guyana and poor health prevent him from playing a more active UN role at this time. End Comment.

OAS Visit Unlikely Before February

14. (C) Ambassador raised the issue of OAS A/SGY Ramdin's anticipated trip to Guyana and OAS' apparent position that it cannot consider long-term observers to monitor Guyana's 2006 elections, without a specific written request from the GoG for long-term observers. (Note: In a September 15 letter GoG invited OAS to "participate as an observer in the 2006 General and Regional Elections", language that the Commonwealth, EU, and CARICOM read to include long-term observers, if a long-term element is necessary to making a reasoned judgment on the election as a whole. End note.) Insanally asked for clarification as to what long-term observers entailed. After Ambassador explained, Insanally said he would discuss the matter "with the relevant people". However, he also said that the observer issue will be discussed when Ramdin comes to Guyana. Insanally said he had suggested to Ramdin that he visit in February and will follow up with him.

15. (C) Comment. Although Insanally has a dialogue with

Ramdin, he is not a key decision-maker on the election  
observer question. End comment.  
BULLEN